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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians
(*Section of the Library Association*)

EDITOR: D. HARRISON

Central Library, Manchester 2.

VOL. 53. NO. 9. SEPTEMBER, 1960

After the Proposals

If the current proposals for the reorganisation of the L.A. are put into effect, a large number of the profession will be rendered voteless in L.A. affairs. Not, however, in the affairs of the A.A.L. The L.A. Secretary's Memorandum expressly uses the words ". . . the right to vote in the Association (*other than at A.A.L. elections and meetings*) be restricted to . . ."

Should this come to pass it would appear to proffer something of a challenge to this Association. The non-Chartered Librarian will tend to have his (or her) interest concentrated on the one part of the Association in which he still has a vote, and through which his views can still be represented at L.A. Council. The A.A.L. may well gain something here; we may profit by better attended meetings and more interest in other A.A.L. affairs—even in the A.A.L. election since there will no longer be such a bewildering variety of elections to cope with. The A.A.L. could in fact become a more well-defined body—even without casting off the over-30s.

This may afford an opportunity to check the problem of apathy which is prevalent at local level. The appalling number of new members who failed recently to opt for the A.A.L. (as reported in Council Notes for May) shows that we are failing to gain the interest of the new entrant. Which seems to imply also that we have failed to *keep* the interest of those who should have spent a little time encouraging these new members to opt for the A.A.L. If the A.A.L. becomes the only place where new entrants can vote we may do better in this respect. But we should be ready to do something more than passively accept such a position; we should get over the idea that the A.A.L. is worth joining for its own sake not merely because it is all that is left!

Opposition by individuals to the idea of joining and, having joined, actively supporting the A.A.L. is induced by causes ranging from the malice of anti-A.A.L. senior staff to simple psychological defence mechanisms. Several attitudes of mind are prevalent. One is that the A.A.L. is merely a convenient ladder for the ambitious. Another is that the right way for the average assistant to operate is to get as much time off for classes and library school as possible, do the minimum in his own time, get A.P.T. I quickly and the rest will surely follow. This seems to be a job for Divisional Officers and Committees and for A.A.L. representatives in individual libraries. The new edition of *Invitation and Opportunity* should help to put the A.A.L. over to the new member, but we need the personal approach as well. Institutions like ours are outdated in an atmosphere in which everything is provided without voluntary effort. If we are to survive we must inculcate the

idea that voluntary effort and a healthy outside-library-hours interest in the profession are normal attributes of the good librarian and not the perquisite of a few fanatics.

GURNER P. JONES, F.L.A.

Many librarians will have learned with regret of the death of Gurner P. Jones, former librarian of Stepney, but those who were members of the Association of Assistant Librarians in the 1920s and 1930s and particularly those who served with him on the Council feel a rather special sorrow. During that period, the Association lived through stirring, not to say, stormy times. It changed its name; it inaugurated correspondence courses for the education of its members and the question of possible amalgamation with the Library Association was ceaselessly debated. In the midst of all this Gurner P. Jones went on his alert, cheerful way; an active member of the Council being in turn both its Honorary Secretary and its President. Although the rules of the Association required that members resigned from the Council when they became Chief Librarians this was waived for a period in his case so that we did not lose the benefit of his long experience. But it is not so much for his official work that we remember him with so much affection but because of the kind of man he was. He radiated cheerful kindness. He was particularly helpful to new members and with a few words made them feel how glad we were to have them. Untiring work, untiring kindness—these are our memories of Gurner.

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TELEX

by Brian Rogerson

Manchester Public Libraries

Telex is a 24 hour teleprinter service, maintained by the G.P.O.; an office to office communication system by which printed messages are exchanged between two correspondents on teleprinting machines. Printed copies of a message are reproduced at both the sending and receiving ends, providing a permanent record of the details of the message. Dialling is now fully automatic in most parts of the U.K., and soon will be, both throughout this country, and to Europe also. Correspondents are connected instantly by simply dialling a number, as one would by telephone. Telex connects 100,000 overseas subscribers on the international network, and the number of subscribers in the U.K. (5,000 at present) is increasing at the rate of 1,000 a year.

Subscribers have their own teleprinter, mounted on an attractive metal desk. They are connected by a direct line to an automatic exchange. The installation is similar in form to a typewriter and can be operated by a competent typist up to a maximum speed of 60 words a minute. Rental charges are £160 per annum, and the charge for calls is calculated on a basic 2d. rate, which will buy a prescribed amount of time according to the distance of the connection, viz:

60 seconds for a distance up to 35 miles
30 seconds for a distance 35 to 50 miles
20 seconds for a distance 50 to 75 miles
15 seconds for a distance over 75 miles

At 60 words a minute, a 15 word message could be sent to London from Sheffield for 2d.—cheaper than a telephone call!

Manchester Public Libraries joined the telex network in June 1955, the first municipal library in Europe to do so. At the time of writing, only four other public libraries in the U.K. are connected by telex, those at Stoke-on-Trent, Sheffield, Birmingham and Nottingham. The National Central Library has recently become a subscriber with the intention of using the system to speed up the inter-lending service, and it is confidently expected that the resources of the new National Science Lending Library will be available by telex.

The advantages of telex are many. Some are advantages of a system which would apply to any user, be he a librarian or a company executive. These can be listed briefly:

(i) Speed and accuracy in the transmission of a message.
(ii) With each message transmitted, a printed record is provided both for the sender and the receiver. Each has an accurate copy of the the message as sent and any mistakes can be spotted and rectified immediately. This is particularly valuable when the message:—
  (a) is in a foreign language with which the correspondents are not familiar.
  (b) contains statistics or other information which is shewn to the best advantage in a tabulated form.
  (c) is of a technical nature.
  (d) contains numerical references, e.g., to patents or periodical articles.

(e) is longer than is convenient or practicable for a telephone message, but is too urgent to go by letter.

(iii) The installation does not require immediate staff attention to receive a message, and a record of the inquiry is preserved until it can be conveniently attended to. In a public library this means that the staff can devote their attention to the public without the distraction of a constantly ringing telephone.

Perhaps the advantages of telex are best summed up by the slogan—"the speed of the telephone with the authority of the printed word."

The advantages as applied to libraries are less specific, and may vary according to the type of library concerned. The applications of telex as they affect the Manchester Public Library may serve to illustrate its value. It is emphasised that in the past the telex installation at Manchester has been used primarily to give informaton. More than 2,000 messages a year have been dealt with, and of these 70 per cent have been for specific items of information. It is anticipated however that requests from and to the National Central Library will now increase the percentage of requests for the inter-lending of books and other material, and the provision of photocopies.

The wide resources of a large reference library such as Manchester represent millions and millions of facts, systematically collected and stored, readily available to the public. Comparable resources are available to only a very small percentage of the population. For instance, the Manchester Reference Library contains a complete collection of British Government Publications, a total bookstock of over half a million volumes, five million patent specifications, current directories covering the world, and over three thousand periodicals taken currently. Its specialised departments collect pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, maps, photographs, financial and company information—the most up to date factual material which may never become available in the conventional forms. Such vast resources would normally be the perquisite of only the largest reference libraries, but by telex they become available to the smallest industrial library in any part of the country.

The generally rapid expansion of knowledge and the speed of modern communications has not only increased the tremendous flow of information being made available, but also the demand for it. The enormous complexity of knowledge now available in one form or another is such that only the largest and most efficient of machines can organise and direct it into the most productive channels. A large proportion of this information is now available to over 5,000 subscribers in the U.K. alone. Unnecesary research is obviated. For many librarians, the borderline decision to buy a reference work of uncertain value is not necessary.

It must be emphasised that the usefulness of telex is not restricted to the area in which the library is situated. The Manchester information and technical service, although extensively used by commercial firms in the immediate vicinity, is also extended quite freely both to industrial concerns and specialised libraries throughout the country. The number of inquiries received is constantly increasing as the number of subscribers increases and as they discover the full extent of the resources that are available. Telex however, is not used only to supply information but also to obtain it. Urgent requests for information are frequently sent to the Board of Trade, to foreign embassies and trade commissioners, and to government departments. A few examples of inquiries which have been satisfactorily answered may help to illustrate the diversity of the types of information required:

1. Will you please translate the following from the Acme code: ACAVF NUFPA?
2. Can you provide any information or literature references on the use of hydraulics and pneumatics in spindle drives for textile machinery?
3. We should be grateful if you could let us have the names of cotton forwarding agents in Trieste.
4. Can you give any information about J. Crome, painter, and the current value of his paintings?
5. Can you provide information on a West German consortium called (we believe) "Interatom" formed by the German firm Demag and Atomics International of California, U.S.A.? Information on parties to the consortium and their financial status would be welcome.

With the world output of books and periodicals constantly increasing it is becoming ever more impossible for any one library to maintain a completely exhaustive collection of material. To facilitate efficient and speedy inter-lending it is necessary that libraries must keep in much closer contact than they have done in the past. The Manchester and Sheffield Public Libraries have a working agreement whereby loans requested by telex are posted the same day directly to the library concerned, cutting out the delay normally experienced when obtaining material through the Regional Bureaux. Now that the National Central Library has joined the telex network, it is possible for them to liaise more closely with the North Western Bureau, which is based in Manchester, to expedite the interlending of material at an inter-regional level. In this connection also, the R.S.I. Section of the L.A. is preparing a list of organisations willing to use telex on inter-library loans and information. It would appear that telex will eventually become an integral part of the inter-lending mechanism of the U.K., but as will be seen later, we will not by any stretch of the imagination, be leading the world.

By telex, the same facility and speed of communication can be maintained at an international level. Manchester Public Library is in regular contact with the library of the Technical University of Delft for the purpose of inter-lending material, providing photocopies, giving information, and sometimes making communications which would normally be made by letter. Also messages from Delft for the Manchester College of Science and Technology can be sent by telex to the Public Library and relayed by telephone. For the cost of a 4s. 9d. call to Delft, an urgently required book can be obtained from Holland in two days. It is also possible to obtain material from foreign publishers in a matter of days instead of weeks.

The use of teleprinters in libraries in the Netherlands, in fact in Europe as a whole, has developed far more rapidly than in this country. In the Netherlands alone 35 libraries are connected by the telex network. In Germany and Switzerland, and also the United States, the importance of telex as a national and international link has been recognised. Inter-library co-operation in Europe is expected to develop even more rapidly as dialling becomes fully automatic. At present, only France and the United Kingdom do not have complete automatic dialling, but soon it will be automatic both throughout this country and also from here to the Continent

Although, as librarians, our first considerations may be concerned with the uses of telex as applied to libraries, it may be interesting to conclude with a few thoughts on telex in general. The teleprinter is a combination of the most attractive features of the telephone and the

typewriter—immediate contact and accuracy in print. By the telex service the interchange of messages between telex subscribers in this country and those in the rest of the world is assured for 24 hours a day. In our position as a trading nation, whose very livelihood depends on the success of her trading activities, the advantages of such a system would appear to be self evident. Not only do we depend on our success as traders, but also on the ability of our scientists and technicians to keep us in the forefront of modern development in the technical sphere. To do this every available item of information must be put at their disposal, and unnecessary duplication of effort in research must be kept to a minimum. Too often is valuable time spent on research to which an answer has already been found. The constant interchange of material and information by telex can be the means of saving thousands of hours a year by scientists and business executives. It is significant that telex traffic from Britain to Canada in 1957 averaged 2,000 minutes a week. That figure is increasing all the time, yet we are behind many other countries! It would seem that the use of telex as an everyday means of communication has only just begun, but will increase until it will be essential for every business concern of any consequence to have one. And we as librarians must be prepared to serve them, as we do by telephone, in every way possible, not only for the satisfaction of our professional consciences, but also as part of the effort to ensure the prosperity of the nation.

Appendix

Here is a list of some of the libraries who are known to be on the telex network. The Library of the Technical University, Delft is at present engaged in compiling a list of all libraries who are connected by telex.

U.S.A.

John Crerar, Chicago.
Denver Public
Lehigh University
Library of Congress
Linda Hall, Kansas City
Michigan State University
Midwest Inter-Library Centre, Chicago
Ohio State University
Purdue University, La Fayette
Union Library Catalogue, Philadelphia
University of California
University of Kansas.

Netherlands

State University, Utrecht
Technical University, Delft.
Technical University, Eindhoven.

Germany

Berlin University
Rhine-Westphalian Technical University, Aachen.
Technical University, Munich.
Technical University, Berlin
Technical University, Dresden
Jena University

Also many societies and research associations, e.g. Batelle-Institut, Frankfurt; Gmelin-Institut; Deutscher Forschungdienst.

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The origins of Machine Composition

by Geoffrey Langley

Nottingham Public Libraries

Most librarians who have come to grips with the Registration examination are only too familiar with the two pillars of modern machine typesetting, the Linotype and Monotype machines and their photographic descendants. Those who have pursued the matter further will also know something of the Intertype machine, and those who have relied upon out-of-date text-books will have confused both themselves and the examiners with details of the Typograph. But few, as they grapple blasphemously with the interiors of Merganthaler and Lanston's brain children, realise that these were by no means first in the field of mechanical composition. In the printing trade to-day, as well as in the library profession, it is commonly thought that Linotype and Monotype were invented *in vacuo*, and came as a revolutionary development sweeping away hand composition in book and newspaper work overnight. In the sense that they were constructed upon what we now know to be the right principles, were reasonably priced and astonishingly efficient, this is no doubt true, but typesetting machinery has a long, acrimonious and gallant history which stretches back long before the coming of the slug-casting machines.

Anyone who is at all familiar with Victorian ways of thought will realise at once that, of all people, they were the least likely to leave such a problem alone, presenting as it did a tripartite appeal to their avarice, to their sense of progress and to their passion for constructing machinery based upon completely mistaken principles which was nevertheless made to work with some degree of efficiency by the relentless application of steam power and sheer mechanical ingenuity. A brief study of Singer's *History of Technology* will show much machinery built and operated during the nineteenth century that would cause a modern technician to take aspirin and retire to bed, and it is scarcely to be supposed that the composition of type, a craft quite unchanged for more than three centuries, would escape the attention of Victorian engineers, superbly confident even in the face of such unfortunate incidents as that of the Tay Bridge. For a long period men had been trying to overcome the two great obstacles to more efficient printing, the hand press and the hand composition of type, and soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century a succession of improbable machines had strained the patience of master printers, leading eventually to the highly efficient power presses of Koenig and Bauer, and the removal of the most important bottleneck. Meanwhile, the rapid increase in the size and circulation of newspapers that followed such developments as the removal of duties and the invention of processes for the manufacture of paper from vegetable fibres had led to armies of compositors, type by the ton, and labour expenses of such an order that at least one newspaper was driven to the purchase of fresh type for each issue rather than incur the cost and labour of distribution. As always, demand stimulated supply, and ingenious minds turned to the solution of the problem. From our superior standpoint it is easy to see that the principle of type-casting as opposed to type-setting forms the only real solution, but to men steeped in the traditions of a craft unchanged since its inception, and moreover lacking the punch-cutting devices essential to modern machines, it was natural to think in terms of

a mechanical compositor, an apparatus which would set, justify and distribute pre-cast foundry types. This, in view of the smallness and delicacy of the units to be handled, posed engineering problems of the first order, and the attitude of some printers and all compositors was, to say the least, sceptical. John Johnson in his *Typographica* (1824) described a machine (1) invented by Dr. Church, an American living in England, who was already the inventor of a successful machine for casting type:—

> It would require no more exertion than that of a person playing on the piano; and so expeditiously was the whole business to be performed, that the types were to be re-cast each time, instead of being distributed in the usual manner. Now, is not such an improbable statement an insult to common sense?

Undeterred by such outspoken comment, machines began to appear. Their progress was consistently opposed by the trade unions, principally the very powerful London Society of Compositors, who remained implacably opposed to the employment of the cheap labour for distribution that could alone make the early machines economical in use, and who did in fact succeed in keeping typesetting machinery out of the Metropolis until the closing years of the century, with only two exceptions.

The first machine to appear in this country was that invented by Henry Bessemer and patented in 1840 by J. H. Young and A. Delcambre, of Lille. The Young-Delcambre, as it was called, was used in the composition of *The Phalanx* in 1841 and the *Family Herald* in 1842 amidst a torrent of abuse from the *Compositors' Chronicle*. The *Family Herald's* machine achieved the very creditable rate of 6,000 letters and spaces an hour, and a note of uneasiness entered into the vituperation. The situation was not helped when it was found that one machine was operated by female labour and another, on investigation, turned out to be used as an ingenious "front" for the employment of unskilled and non-union compositors setting type in the traditional manner. Contemporary illustrations of this machine show it to have been of the pattern which was to remain basically the same until the appearance of Linotypes, Tachytypes and Intertypes. Depression of a key releases a type from a vertical magazine channel into which it has previously been loaded by hand. After release the letter is ejected into a separate composing stick, where it is justified by hand in the traditional fashion. Like all machines of this class, it thus required three operatives; one for the keyboard, one to justify the lines of type delivered from the machine, and one to replenish the type in the magazines. An alternative name for the Young-Delcambre was the Pianotype, and indeed the whole structure bears a very strong resemblance to an upright cottage piano in which the back has been carried up and forward to overhang the keyboard operator. From this overhang depended a frame carrying the copy which was being set. Where the legs of a normal piano would be, the designers incorporated some very fine cast-iron arches in the best Gothic tradiitons. At least one book was set on this apparatus, but it soon proved to be as prolific in mechanical breakdowns as it was in eliciting union abuse, and after two years it was withdrawn, " despite the application of steam," as the *Chronicle* spitefully put it.

In 1853 and 1856 the Mitchell and Alden machines came into use in the United States, mainly for bookwork, but although the Alden could claim to have used no less than 14,626 parts in its construction neither survived for long. The next machine to be introduced to England was that invented by Robert Hattersley in 1857. This, although it lacked the

superior ornamentation of Young and Delcambre, was still quite sufficiently odd in appearance, resembling as it did a two-tier metal bunk sawn in half and covered with piano wire. It had the same basic disadvantage as its predecessors in that it was not really very much quicker than the process it was designed to supersede, since lines still had to be justified by hand and type distributed first into cases and then into the machine magazines, but it was mechanically efficient, and presented sufficient advantages to secure adoption by a number of hard-pressed provincial newspapers, who were able to employ cheap labour for distribution without fear of union action. A very similar machine was invented by Charles Kastenbein in 1869, and installed by *The Times* in 1872. *The Times* had at an early date quarrelled bitterly with the London Society of Compositors, since when it had employed only non-union labour and could consequently install new machinery with impunity. Indeed, it did so to such effect that the cellars in Printing House Square were reliably reported to be choked with discarded inventions, principally unsuccessful typesetters. Kastenbeins remained successfully operating with *The Times* until 1908, when they were at last dislodged by Intertype and Linotype machines. (2)

While Hattersley and Kastenbein equipment was working in newspaper offices such as the *Liverpool Courier* and the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, attempts were being made to overcome the problem of distribution. *The Times* had solved this problem in characteristic fashion by working its Kasterbeins in conjunction with a highly efficient type-casting machine of its own development, thus ensuring fresh type for each issue, but it was a solution not adopted elsewhere. Success finally came with the invention of the Thorne typesetter, which employed a separate machine and specially nicked type for the purpose of distribution. The Thorne achieved some success—its introduction into the *Sportsman* office resulting in lock-outs, accusations of sabotage, and the dismissal of non-union labour—but it was already too late. By about 1893 there were already 230 Linotypes at work in the Provinces, as opposed to 33 Hattersleys (23 of them in Liverpool), 14 Thornes and the Kastenbeins. Interesting developments had taken place—electricity had been applied to machines owned by Clowes (1874), and Alexander Mackie, of Warrington, had used a punched paper ribbon for automatic setting in 1868—but the fight was over. There was, however, one belated development in the shape of the incredible Paige typesetter, which is said to have driven patent agents to suicide and to the mad-house. By using specially nicked founder's type, it could, marvellous to relate, compose, justify and distribute type *at the same time*. It suffered unfortunately from several major disadvantages. It was of enormous size and weight, it was so complicated that only its inventor was ever able completely to understand it, it could deal with only one size of type, and it cost almost a million dollars. Only two were ever built. As Sean Jennett remarks, there is such a thing as being too clever by half, but it was a fitting farewell gesture.

1. British Patent 4664 of 1822. Only a wooden model was ever constructed.
2. Six Hattersley typesetters were installed in the *Daily News* office in 1891, but an attempt to use the necessary cheap labour was defeated by the unions. The machines were soon replaced by Linotypes.

A.A.L. EVENTS.

September 29th—Chaucer House. A.A.L. Council and Committees.

THE POWYS FAMILY

1. Llewelyn (1884-1939)

by Tom Wilson

Librarian, C. A. Parsons and Co. Ltd. Nuclear Research Centre

In almost any discussion of modern literature the name of some member of the Sitwell family is almost bound to crop up; but I have yet to take part in any such conversation into which the name of that equally illustrious family, the Powys, was introduced. I hope that these short essays on the three most noted members of that family will prompt more people to read and to discuss their work.

The three members of the family I propose to write about are Llewelyn Powys, John Cowper Powys and Theodore Francis Powys, and I chose to discuss Llewelyn first because it was his "imaginary autobiography" *Love and death* which was my introduction to this literary family.

Llewelyn Powys was born in Dorchester, eighth child of eleven, in 1884, but spent his childhood and youth from 1885-1914 at Montacute in Somerset, where his father was vicar. The vicarage, the village and the countryside around Montacute are brought to life in many of his books and from all accounts his life there was a happy one. In *Skin for skin* he describes a return from a walk with his brother John:

> "When we had sat down, the old man, my father, rubbing his hands with delight at having his children around him, would ask us about our walk, and we would tell him that we had found the body

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of a dead heron down by Walthams Mill, and also a flower we thought might be a skullcap."

His interest in nature was constant throughout his life and he was capable of describing anything from Swiss gentians to the African bush, and describing them as no one else could.

The tragedy of Llewelyn's life was tuberculosis which struck him down without warning in November 1909, and which finally killed him thirty years later in Switzerland. This disease while responsible for his death was also the chief reason behind his philosophy and responsible for much of the power in his writing. As Kenneth Hopkins says, "Surely no great writer has ever been more passionately aware of the delight of drawing breath." The delight is typified by his *Glory of life* which "was written in a cornfield on the Dorset Downs under a cloudless sky and in full view of the English Channel," and in it his philosophy is delivered with striking urgency:

"An adoration of life is our religion. It is a worship of the moment's duration, inviolate, detached and passionate."

For many this would be a selfish philosophy, but not for Llewelyn Powys. Delighting in being alive himself, he also delighted in the life of others; other people, animals, birds and even fish. "Religious emotion . . . is the worship of the lubberly chub, proud of being a chub at the bottom of the river Yeo."

In spite of, or rather because of his "vigilant enemy" tuberculosis, Llewelyn travelled widely, in Canada, America, the West Indies, Switzerland, the Holy Land, and Africa, and it is his travel writings which contain some of his most memorable phrases:

"The mountain stretched itself into Palestine like a sleeping beast."

". . . pelicans were flying in long precise, rule of thumb lines, beak to legs, legs to beak."

"The startling silence of the rocks."

Black Laughter, his collection of essays on Africa contains much that deserves to be read, particularly today, when Africa seethes with unrest. The underlying violence of Africa is detected and described in such essays as "A Kikuyu riot" and "The rhythm of Africa." Another notable writer on Africa, Negley Farson, says in his introduction to *Black Laughter*, "This book has undertones of Africa that I think you will find in no other."

Single quotations from Llewelyn's work cannot really give a true indication of the diversity of his writing which ranges from fiction through travel, literary essays, biography, and esays on the countryside (of several countries) to philosophy. His language can vary from the rhapsodic, as in *Love and death* to the terse, as in the chapter "The mutiny" in *Henry Hudson*.

My own favourites among his works are *Love and death* and *Swiss essays*. The former is, in my opinion, the finest love story of modern times, a love story which puts to shame the current varieties which are concerned solely with either the sordid sexual prancings of advertising men, or with the non-professional activities of doctors and nurses. Llewelyn emphasises the poetic nature of his prose with frequent quotations from many poets and this serves to heighten his effects.

Swiss essays deals with his life while at Clavadal Sanatorium. But tuberculosis is rarely mentioned, although, as Louis Wilkinson said "it

intensified all his perceptions." He is more interested in local characters and the countryside around Davos Platz.

For anyone who is sufficiently interested by this essay—and I hope there will be many—to want a more complete introduction to his work, the best available is *Llewelyn Powys: a selection from his writings*, made by Kenneth Hopkins, published by MacDonald & Co., 1952. This contains excerpts from many books, including three chapters from *Love and death* and a check list of books by, and relating to, Llewelyn Powys.

Some books by Llewelyn Powys may be difficult to obtain and therefore of necessity, reading may be spread over a long period, but they are worth seeking. As anyone who reads Llewelyn Powys will realise, his best epitaph is that carved into a simple block of Portland stone which marks the burial place of his ashes on the cliff head near White Nose:

"The living, the living, he shall praise thee."

WORKS MENTIONED. Only the latest edition is given.

Love and death. Collected ed., John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1950.

Skin for skin. Collected ed., with *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*. John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1948.

Glory of life. Collected ed., with *Now that the gods are dead*. John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1949.

Black laughter. MacDonald & Co. 1953.

Swiss essays. John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1947.

Henry Hudson. John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1927.

Llewelyn Powys: a selection from his writings, MacDonald & Co. 1952.

BIOGRAPHY

The Life of Llewelyn Powys by Malcolm Elwin. John Lane, the Bodley Head. 1946.

Correspondence

What happened in '39

I read the President's address in the *Assistant Librarian* (July, 1960) with much pleasure and would like to offer him my sincere congratulations on a very interesting and succinct review of the Association's history.

May I, however, comment on two of his statements so that the record may be correct. He states "The President and the Hon. Secretary who had signed the report were hotly opposed by other members of the Council. This was not so. The report signed by the President and Honorary Secretary was the Report of the *Council* and had, of course, been previously approved by the Council as a body. It was, in fact, a case of collective responsibility.

Again Mr. Jones states that the President "was shouted down by the annual general meeting at Dagenham." The discussion was certainly lively but members of the A.A.L. have never, in my experience, been so discourteous as to "shout down" their President. On the occasion in

question he, and other speakers, were listened to with attention and courtesy. There was a move to reject the whole of the Council's Report by reference back. No useful purpose would have been served by so doing and the present writer suggested a procedure whereby only the offending paragraph was rejected; the remainder of the Report was adopted.

The proposals for reconstruction which Mr. Jones envisages will emerge from negotiations conducted in a happier spirit than were those of the 1930s. The A.A.L. Representatives will not, I know, meet the difficulties and frustrations encountered by their predecessors. I can, however, foresee one hazard which will be difficult to overcome, namely, restriction of voting rights. Such rights belong to *all* members and if those rights are properly safeguarded then, to quote Mr. Jones again, "the A.A.L. mision will have been accomplished."

A. R. HEWITT, *President, A.A.L.*, 1938.

The President replies

My references to the 1939 Annual Meeting were based on the graphic description by A. L. Carver (who was in the chair) in the *Assistant Librarian*, August 1954. "In the basement we officers were frantically trying to present a united front . . . Council was hopelessly split and at last I led our little band out into the arena with a heavy heart."

So there *was* strong opposition within the Council, though apparently not in the open meeting as I implied. The officer out of step however, was J. T. Gillett, the newly elected Hon. Treasurer, who *did* lead the opposition in the annual meeting, being overwhelmingly supported by the members present.

As for my statement that the President was "shouted down," I used this phrase metaphorically, and it seems to me to convey the sense of what happened at that meeting.

A. C. JONES.

The A.L.A. abroad

In his "Letter from America" in the July *Assistant* Mr. Moon suggests that in my series of articles on the A.L.A. attention should be paid to its status abroad. For myself I can only say that I have taken a domestic view because I do not feel qualified to consider the associateship outside the British Isles, having no direct experience of librarianship abroad.

It is, however, my view that the inferior position often awarded to the A.L.A. abroad compared with qualifications often themselves inferior to our associateship can be remedied only by a *cohesion* in the preparation for and taking of the Registration examination, a compulsory attendance of at least two years at a library school, and a general all-round improvement in librarianship and in its status as a profession. If the new syllabus is put into practice these in fact will be some of the benefits derived from it, and in turn the value of the associateship abroad should greatly increase.

PHILIP C. CLEMENTS, *St. Albans College of Further Education.*

Libraries and Mackintoshes

My attention has been drawn to a quote from one of my books reprinted on p. 147 of *The Assistant Librarian*. I am both appalled to realise that I have been caught red-handed in the act of stabbing my ex-profession in the back, as a result of my bad habit of tossing off remarks merely for effect, and overwhelmed that any among bookmen should have read such a title as *Abbey Makes the Grade*. My first reaction, after I had overcome the feeling of guilt, was to feel greatly flattered. I had visions of librarians up and down the country eagerly seizing my latest piece of trivia, evidence that after all I, the least modest of men, might perhaps

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have been underestimating my worth. This glow lasted a few minutes; it was replaced by the commonsense reflection that a librarian's small son must surely have drawn his father's attention to the judgment, father's influence not yet having weaned Willy from the lower (or even the lowest) to the higher. I was thus back where I had started, left only to brood on the undoubted fact that the mills may grind slowly but exceeding small. Now for all the library world to see I am indeed proved a rat.

Yet, I cannot in all conscience entirely recant. Public libraries do frequently smell of wet mackintoshes. I see that I said that they always smell; that is an exaggeration, but frequently, yes. I do hope that I shall not be struck off the register of Fellows!

ERIC LEYLAND.

Readers of "Liaison" will already have noted that Mr. Leyland, formerly Borough Librarian of Walthamstow and well-known author of children's books takes over the post of Headmaster of a private preparatory school in Chingford in September.

A CLASSIFIER'S REQUIEM

Chanted by a group of acolytes at the grave of Melvil Dewey

Come, let us stand and gather round his tomb,
Groaning in chorus,
Who out of light has brought ten-pointed gloom,
Specially for us.
Never before has man, of church or state,
Put on so trusty an
Armour against the random pricks of fate.
Bed so procrustean
Made he of tens and other subdivisions,
Unit by unit,
That all the classes (matter for decisions)
Were very soon knit.
Knowledge had left him when we found him there,
But animation
Still moved his tongue, that babbled on the air
Classification.
Thus to behold him at his last we trembled,
Weak in the joints,
Whose eyes had shrunk until they but resembled
Decimal points.
Naught could he see beyond his own old fingers
(He'd lost his glasses)
Thus in his work he had no choice but bring us
Only ten classes.
All his last words we wrote, and as we scribbled
Tried to assist him.
Little our thanks: all greet with comments ribald
Decimal system.

ALLAN LEACH.

After Browning's *A Grammarians Funeral* (*Some way after*)

Reviews

Pargeter, P. S. The reproduction of catalogue cards. Library Association. 8s. 6d. (6s. 6d. to members) post 2d.

This is a very useful little book which describes as simply as possible the mechanical processes by which the cataloguer's entry can be transferred on to the required number of cards with the minimum of effort. (It does not appear that any mechanical process is more economical than typing when only two or three cards are wanted).

Following the general description of each process, modifications available to make the process suitable for catalogue cards are described, and then follows a most practical section giving makers of machines and approximate costs and noting where indivdual models are in use, with comments. (North-western readers may care to add Manchester Public Libraries to the users of Multilith Model 50).

No system, the author admits, is perfect; the most that can be achieved at present is to select the means which offers most advantages and fewest disadvantages for a particular purpose.

As a notebook for the student this pamphlet provides an admirable summary; to the practising librarian it forms a base from which to obtain more detailed information.

Mechanisation in the catalogue department follows inevitably in the course of progress but one feels that the process of reproduction of the catalogue entry should be distinguished from the art of cataloguing proper. The easier it is to multiply entries for a book, the greater the inclination to enter it under all imaginable headings and subjects rather than spend time and effort in trying to anticipate the exact heading or subject under which the book will be found by the reader to whom it will be useful whether he knows of the book's existence or not. Cataloguing and classification have their rules but nothing can replace the intuitive perception necessary for effective and economic cataloguing. However easy it is to reproduce catalogue cards, extra cards mean extra sorting and filing, extra cabinet space and extra time to withdraw, apart from the extra cost of the cards. Catalogue card reproduction is an adjunct of cataloguing; it is not a substitute.

NORA K. FIRBY.

Public library buildings: the way ahead. Library Association.

Because we are all members of the L.A. it is a pleasure to report upon a pamphlet, issued in our name, which is both attractive and useful. An eye-catching cover with three good colour blocks, intelligent layout—can this be the L.A. we knew?

Designed obviously for the interested layman, the text not only makes an unanswerable case for an enlarged and enlightened library building programme nationally, but provides ready-made facts and figures so that local cases can be reinforced and presented in their full strength. Because it lays down size and stock per thousands of the population it will not be above criticism at the library schools, and herein lies most of its value to students; not as a handy crib for Org. and Admin. but as a trigger for argument.

The photographs are less easy to accept. Of the 14, four are of Sheffield libraries; three of these are practice of the thirties, the other undistinguished. It is difficult to see why a photograph of an American children's library was needed when hundreds of British Secondary Modern Schools can show better and more imaginative examples.

There is evidence of shrewd thinking behind the production of this booklet. With this in the hands of his Committee, even the deadest of chiefs will find it hard to retain his cobwebbed peace. Now let's have the rest of the series—one for county buildings, college library standards of space and equipment, standards of book stocks, staffing, and then on to the details of flooring, furnishing and the rest of it. Of course the facts have all been presented before, but not like this.

GODFREY THOMPSON.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

Nominations are invited for the following Officers and Councillors to serve during 1961:—

Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Editor.

Nine National Councillors, at least three of whom must be under 30 years of age on 1st January, 1961.

By resolution of Council, the special provision on the ballot papers hitherto provided for National Councillors under 30 years of age will be withdrawn. The three candidates under 30 years of age polling the highest number of votes will be declared elected. The remaining successful candidates will be the six others polling the highest number of votes irrespective of age.

Nomination must be submitted to me in writing by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee and accompanied by suitable biographical details, (i.e. present and previous Authorities, work for L.A., A.A.L., Nalgo etc. and the candidate's age as at 1st January, 1961). The last day for receipt of nominations is 15th October, 1960 .

JOHN HOYLE, *Honorary Secretary, 45 Camphill Road, Woolton, Liverpool.*

* * * *

A.A.L. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

FULL LENGTH COURSES, NOVEMBER, 1960—NOVEMBER, 1961.

Application for F.P.E. REGISTRATION AND FINAL courses beginning November, 1960, must be completed and returned by 30*th September*. Full particulars of the courses offered are given in the current edition of the *Student's Handbook*.

FORMS, FEES AND ENQUIRIES.

Requests for application forms must be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes and should be sent to the A.A.L. Hon. Education Officer, Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., 49, Halstead Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21. The fee for each course is £3 10s. 0d. Students outside Europe are charged 10s. extra for each course.

Talking Points

Those who heard or read Harold Smith's address to the A.A.L. session of last year's L.A. Conference will have noted that he has now slightly less cause to catigate the B.M. The Reading Room will now remain open on two nights a week until 9.30 p.m., which at least is progress. What the A.A.L. thought yesterday, the B.M. thinks today, apparently.

A recent publication of **Finsbury Public Libraries**, entitled "Finsbury Library Service—a handbook for Teachers" spotlights the need for co-operation by the public library with the rapidly growing school libraries —not to mention the more general long term connection of the public library with education. *Liaison* in June reported useful activity along the same lines at Purley in the form of "open-evenings" at which teachers met library staff and inspected the departments of the library. The public library's utility towards society is in some doubt in certain respects; it is good to hear of activity in directions in which there can be no doubt of its value.

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